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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000497

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SUBJECT: NATO SYG PROPOSES REGULAR CONSULTATIONS WITH
AMBASSADOR DURING NOVEMBER 3 BREAKFAST MEETING

REF: USNATO 0495

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder for reasons 1.4(b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen hosted Ambassador Daalder for breakfast November 3 to discuss Alliance issues and improving coordination with the PermReps. Rasmussen was particularly interested in coordinating closely with the US and suggested regular one-on-one meetings with the Ambassador. Raising NATO's political profile is a top priority, he said, which was why he focuses so much on his public diplomacy role. Ambassador encouraged him to work closely with the PermReps, who also want to boost the Alliance's profile and are his best allies in capitals. SYG also raised Afghanistan, Missile Defense, Russia, the December Foreign Ministers' meeting, the Washington Strategic Concept seminar and NATO reform. The two also discussed Germany's proposal to remove US nuclear weapons from Europe (septel). End summary.

¶2. (C) In a November 3 breakfast meeting, SYG Rasmussen emphasized to the Ambassador his commitment to work with the PermReps to raise NATO's political profile. The US would play a particularly important role in this, he said, adding he hoped to have regular one-on-one meetings with the Ambassador to discuss key issues. The Ambassador welcomed the SYG's initiative, agreeing that good communication was essential. All 28 allies share the SYG's goal of boosting NATO's political profile and effectiveness, he said; the PermReps can serve as useful partners in the SYG's efforts. NATO needed to stay focused on issues where the Alliance has a role to play, the Ambassador noted. The best way to make NATO more effective and raise its profile is to focus on how the Alliance better perform its core functions -- deploying military forces and preparing to meet future contingencies.

AFGHANISTAN

¶3. (C) SYG Rasmussen and the Ambassador agreed to use the time prior to a USG announcement on ISAF contributions for consultations with allies. Exploring what allies are in a position to contribute may help shape the USG resourcing decision and could be useful preparation for the November 23-24 Force Generation Conference. In addition to the NAC, bilateral consultations were needed with allies who may be able to make sizeable troop contributions (France, Germany, Italy, UK, Turkey), as well as with Canada and the Netherlands who have announced troop withdrawals. The SYG's personal efforts to encourage these countries to step up would also be important. On the concept of a Senior Civilian counterpart to General McChrystal, Rasmussen reported his staff is exploring primarily two options: creating a position similar to the Kosovo UNMIK High Representative and an option that would strengthen UNAMA.

MISSILE DEFENSE

14. (C) Rasmussen stressed that he wants to work with the US on Missile Defense, including getting NATO Foreign Ministers to agree to the Defense Secretary's four points (i.e., welcoming the Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA), affirming territorial MD as an appropriate NATO mission, recognizing PAA as a US national contribution to that mission, and noting that expanding ALTBMD to assume a territorial MD role would be key to the success of that mission) at the December Foreign Ministers meeting, with final decisions at the 2010 Lisbon summit. A fifth point, on potential MD cooperation with Russia, might also be added. Ambassador noted that a number of allies -- Spain, UK, France -- had put markers down in various meetings and he suggested that they coordinate diplomatic efforts to get them on board by December.

JOINT THREAT REVIEW

15. (C) The SYG told the Ambassador he aimed to agree on a tasking by the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Foreign Ministers meeting in December to conduct the Joint Review of Security Challenges. He intent was a short tasking focused on Afghanistan, terrorism, Missile Defense, proliferation, arms control, piracy and energy security. The tasking would need to complete the Review in December 2010, after the NATO Summit and the completion of the Strategic Concept.

DECEMBER FM MEETING

16. (C) Rasmussen wants the December 3-4 Foreign Ministers

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meeting in Brussels to include a NATO-Georgia meeting, a NATO-Ukraine meeting, an NRC meeting, an ISAF meeting (at 43) and a NAC discussion of the Balkans, the Strategic Concept, Missile Defense and Russia. He intends to start the meeting in the morning on December 3 and end by lunch on December 4 (reftel).

NATO REFORM

17. (C) The Ambassador said the US would like to work closely with Rasmussen on NATO reform -- a critical issue for the USG. NATO's ability to take action would be essential to any effort to raise the Alliance's profile and credibility. A top-down review of NATO's committee structure would be a good starting point, he added. Rasmussen suggested a brainstorming session that he and the Ambassador and key members of their staffs could convene to examine NATO reform ideas in greater depth.

WASHINGTON SEMINAR DATES

18. (C) Rasmussen proposed holding the Washington Strategic Concept seminar February 22-23, to avoid scheduling conflicts with the current February 16-18 dates. He noted he would have to depart the evening of February 23 in order to attend the February 24 EU Defense Ministers meeting in Brussels.

COMMENT

19. (C) Rasmussen's offer to consult more often and more closely with PermReps, particularly the US, is a welcome overture. His acknowledgement of the importance of working constructively with NATO ambassadors to raise the Alliance's political profile and effectiveness bodes well for our ability to make meaningful progress on NATO issues.

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